

***IBADI THEOLOGY.
REREADING SOURCES
AND
SCHOLARLY WORKS***

ERSILIA FRANCESCA (ED.)



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Ibādī 'aqīda-s in Berber

Anna Maria Di Tolla

The literature on the subject of Berber codicology is rather limited (with some exceptions). The Berber manuscripts are dispersed in different countries in North Africa and in Europe or are in private libraries and collections which have been passed from generation to generation.¹ Today, many of these manuscripts are at risk of permanent damage or the loss of an inherited collection.

The aim of this paper is to provide essential background information on some important Berber manuscripts and the many scholars who contributed to develop Ibādī literary tradition and translated and commented some Ibādī 'aqīda-s. This paper starts with an outline survey of Berbers in North Africa and the expansion of the Ibādiyya in North Africa, followed by a brief overview of the principal centres that propagated Ibādī teachings in North Africa and some aspects of the Berber Ibādī literary tradition.

Berbers in North Africa

In the countries of North Africa, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, more than 95 percent of the population of the region is Sunnī Muslim, although there are wide variations in belief and practice. Ṣūfī traditions and saints are a prominent feature of the Maghrib, as are syncretic and mystical interpretations of Islam. Culturally, the countries of North Africa are distinguished by their significant Berber populations, and this heritage exerts a strong influence on their linguistic traditions and political organization. Berbers form approximately 40 percent of the population in Morocco, 25 percent in Algeria, and more than 5 percent in Tunisia and Libya.

The exact number of Berber speakers is not known, and estimates vary greatly. According some statistics, for example, there may be between 16 and 25 million speakers.² Concerning Ibādī Berbers in North Africa, they are minorities in Jabal Nafūsa and Zuwāra in Libya, Jerba Island in Tunisia and Mzab in Algeria.

The expansion of the Ibādiyya in North Africa

It is not known precisely when the Ibādī School started gaining followers in North Africa. During the second half of the 7th/13th century, when the Ibādī School was established in Baṣra, Islam itself gained a stronghold over North Africa in spite of the initial opposition it encountered from the Berbers. According to Lewicki³, the people of Jabal Nafūsa remained firm Christians after the Muslim conquest and in all probability they were converted directly to Khārijism Ṣufrī and Ibādī doctrines.

One of the earliest Ṣufrī preachers who arrived in North Africa from the east was of Berber origin, Abū 'Abdullāh 'Ikrima. He grew up to become a disciple of Ibn 'Abbās, the Prophet's cousin. 'Ikrima came to acquire such a depth of knowledge about the *sharī'a* that he 'was authorized to carry out the duties of *muftī* at Mecca. Later, he moved to Qayrawān where he worked as a missionary until his death in 725–6. It was during this latter part of his career that he evidently met and converted the future founder of the Mīdrārid dynasty of Sijilmāsa, Abū 'l-Qāsim, to Ṣufrism.

The Khārijites, Ṣufrī and Ibādīs insisted that legitimate rule did not belong to any particular group and that any pious Muslim could assume the leadership of the community. Among the Ṣufrites, a black slave was eligible to lead the Muslim community.

For the Berbers, Ṣufrism and Ibādism, with their stress on the essential equality of all Muslims regardless of ethnic origin, became the religious expressions of their Berber identity and the political autonomy they were trying to maintain against the Umayyad Arab governors.⁴ According to Bel, this was the historical reason for the success of the expansion of the Khārijism in the Maghrib region. The Berbers escaped not only an oppressor, but also a centralized bureaucratic model that they did not accept.⁵

The great Berber rebellion of 740–742 belongs in this context. It is generally agreed that this revolt in North Africa had two causes. These were firstly punitive taxation and, secondly, the discriminatory treatment against Berbers. As a result, the Ghumāra, Miknāsa and Barghawāṭa

confederations rebelled under the banner of Khārijism. They were led into battle by a Šufrite water carrier called Maysara. The rebellion was finally quashed in 742 when the new Umayyad governor of Egypt, Hanšāla b. Safwān, defeated the Šufrites at the twin battles of al-Qarn and al-Asnān in Ifrīqiya. The Šufrites were subjected to heavy repression afterwards. Herein lies the most probable reason for the foundation of Sijilmāsa by the Šufrites in the south-east of Morocco.

The Ibādīs in Ifrīqiya (Tripolitania and in South Tunisia)

Berber tribes in Tripolitania were the first to accept the new faith. From the outset, the Islamic Arab invasion in North Africa had met with the opposition of most of the Berber confederations. When large masses of Berbers finally converted to Islam, many of them adopted mainly the Khārijite forms of Ibādism and Šufrism. Several Ibādī tribal chiefs took part in the revolt of 740; and among them was ‘Abdullāh b. Mas‘ūd al-Tujībī, a leader from the Hawwāra Berber tribe in the vicinity of Tripoli.⁶ Two other Ibādī Berber leaders appeared in Libya and conquered all of Tripolitania. They were ‘Abd al-Jabbār b. Qays al-Murādī and al-Hārith b. Talīd al-Ḥaḍramī. Another Berber chief is mentioned after 750. He was Ismā‘īl b. Ziyād of the Nafūsa tribe, but he was killed after becoming chief and laying siege to Gabes.

According to the Muslim chronicles, the most important Ibādī centre was located in Tripoli, in the region of Jabal Nafūsa in Western Libya. Several centres and schools were established in different areas of the Jabal Nafūsa, teaching the Ibādī doctrine and among all the holiest regions of the Maghrib, this occupies a special place in history.

In eastern Tripolitania, other Ibādī centres were in the territory of the tribe of Mazāta and in the central region of the tribe of Hawwāra. Other Berber tribes of Ifrīqiya and Libya were involved: the Zanāta and Nafūsa, the Zawāgha and Zawāra. The Ibādīs had settled on the west coast of Tripoli, at Darisa, in the District of Īfren and in the region of Jabal Nafūsa; to Ghadāmes, to Derdj; to Mizda in Fazzān in the south. The Ibādīs among the Berbers of the Maghrib regarded the regions to the west as far as Warjlān in Algeria, and the whole of Tripolitania, “as the heartland of their faith”⁷

The Ibādīs established in Jabal Nafūsa reached a high level of science, piety, justice and fervour and were respected from the Maghrib to the Mashriq. Although their contacts with the Imamate in Tāhart were weak-

ened after the Battle of Mānū (in the south of Gabes) against the Aghlabids in the year 896, they had a virtually independent role in preserving Ibādī teachings.

In southern Tunisia, mainly in the oasis of Jarīd called ‘the land of Qasṭīliya’, the evolution of the Ibādī movement started in the first half of the 2nd/8th century. If the armed struggle against the Arabic occupant was the main reason for the first groups that assembled under the Ibādī banner, this faith later directed the lives of many descendants from birth to death, creating a strong community.

Many Nukkarites, Wahbites, Khalafite populations and several Berber Kutāma groups took refuge in Jerba Island to escape persecutions from the Fātimids, where they joined the indigenous Berber Lamāya that inhabited the island.⁸

Today, some villages in Jerba Island belong to this branch of Islam in its Wahbite form, the most moderate of the various subdivisions of Ibādism. Among the most important Ibādī authors was Abū ‘l-Rabī’ Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Salām al-Wisiyānī,⁹ who belonged to the tribe of Banū Wisiyān, a branch that lived in the Jarīd, and wrote the *Kitāb al-siyar*. Another important author was a native of Darjīn, near Nefta, al-Darjīnī who wrote the famous *Kitāb ṭabaqāt al-mashā’ikh* in 1253.¹⁰ Al-Barrādī, who was born in Jabal Demmar, in the south of Tunisia, completed the text by al-Darjīnī many years after.¹¹

The Rustamids in Tāhart

‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Rustam al-Fārisī was one of the ‘bearers of learning’ (*ḥamalāt al-‘ilm*). When he was elected to the Imamate in Tāhart by a council of Berber tribal leaders, the Ibādīs of Bašra sent a special delegation to examine his conduct, and they gave him full support morally and financially.

The Ibādī Rustamids of Tāhart, according to Ibn Ṣaghīr, were just and noble, and were laudable in their conduct toward their citizens. Ibn Ṣaghīr wrote that one could not visit a place without being informed of the foreigners living in that neighborhood; a mosque in one place served a certain population, who lived alongside a district inhabited by people from an entirely different part of the world.¹² The Rustamid state was a federation of Berber tribes which recognized an elected member of the Rustamid family as their *imām*.

The Ibādīs (778–908) ruled over most of the central Maghrib from Tāhart and the city became one of the most important centres for propagating Ibādī teachings. Abū Ghānim al-Khurāsānī went to Tāhart to present his books to the *imām*. Every year, the Rustamid organi-

zed general meetings in the town where people could exchange news and religious ideas. The Rustamid themselves participated in the teachings, educated and wrote books.

The relations between Sijilmāsa and Tāhart were fairly amicable at that time as both states shared a broadly similar Khārijite outlook.¹³ These relations became more important, as Lewicki suggests, when Midrār b. al-Yāsā b. al-Qāsim in 823–4 married 'Urwā, the daughter of 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Rustam al-Fārisī (r. 776–84), governor of Tāhart and founder of the Ibādī Rustamid state. This marriage may well have been concluded by Tāhart as an act of prudence in order to secure certain advantages in a commercial environment increasingly coming to be dominated by Sijilmāsa.¹⁴

The Fāṭimids arrived westward in 911, destroyed the imamate of Tāhart and conquered Sijilmāsa. Ibādī Khārijite refugees from Tāhart fled south to the oasis at Warjilān. In the 5th/11th century, they moved southwest to Wādī Mzab. Ibādī religious leaders in the region maintained their cohesion and beliefs over the centuries until today.

The Banū Midrār and Sijilmāsa

According to al-Bakrī,¹⁵ the Banū Midrār, Berber Ṣufrites, ruled for one hundred and sixty years over Sijilmāsa. The city of Sijilmāsa became the greatest Khārijite centre in Morocco and the Midrārīds ruled for two centuries. The geographical importance of the region influenced the early development of Sijilmāsa under the Midrārīds. Its location on the trade route saw its greatest growth. The trans-Saharan trade networks from Sijilmāsa reached Awdaghāst and Ghāna where traders exchanged copper, brass, and salt for the gold of West Africa.¹⁶ Ibādī merchants from the North of Africa developed the trans-Saharan trade routes in the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries. While the Midrārīds controlled the flow of gold, Ibādī merchants from the east established a monopoly on the slave trade in the eastern Maghrib. Savage argued that "the slave trade formed the basis of Ibādīte expansion in the second half of the 2nd/8th century".¹⁷ At any rate, while orthodox Muslims were the first transmitters of Islam to the Maghrib, it was the Khārijite exiles that captured the imagination of the Berbers and transmitted Islam to sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁸

Banū Ṭārif and Barghawāṭa

According to Ibn Khaldūn,¹⁹ the Barghawāṭa belonged to Masmūda and settled in the Moroccan province of Tāmasnā, across the plains of the Atlantic coast, between the *wādī* Bū Regreg and *wādī* Tensift. The Barghawāṭa embraced the Khārijite cause and followed Maysara, the water carrier, or water seller (*al-saqqā'*) during the revolt in 740.

Their chief, a certain Ṭārif, *mawlā* of Mūsā b. Nusayr, crossed the Strait in 710 commanding 500 Berber warriors to conquer the South of Spain. In 742, he founded a Ṣufrite kingdom and his successor, Ṣāliḥ b. Ṭārif was a good Muslim, a pure, chaste and austere man in his private life. His son Elias (Ilyās) reigned between 793 and 842.

Yūnus was the fourth ruler of the kingdom of Barghawāṭa. He made the pilgrimage to Mecca and undertook a long study trip to East. An educated man, he was interested in the occult sciences.²⁰ He was not insensitive to questions of Persian *shu'ūbiyya* (a movement defending the rights of non-Arabs) which fed a kind of revenge that was manifested in the foundation of a new religion with a *Qur'ān* in Berber and that, following the example in Arabic, enhanced the language and civilization.²¹

Yūnus, using the prestige and sanctity of his grandfather Ṣāliḥ b. Ṭārif, revealed a prophecy that he had kept hidden. His grandfather was the Prophet of the Berbers and his name appeared in the *Qur'ān* of Muḥammad. According to the historian Talbi, the theory, the doctrine and probably the *Qur'ān* were the inspiration of Yūnus who spread this new doctrine, a mix of Sunnism, Shī'a and Khārijism, during his long reign lasting about 43 years (843–885). The purpose of Yūnus was to render Islam in a local and independent form to maintain the political unity of his kingdom. On the political level, despite repeated attacks by the Idrīsīs, the Umayyads of al-Andalus and the Almoravids, the kingdom of Barghawāṭa survived until 1148 when the Almohad swept it away.

Their doctrine as well, as Zammūr suggests, reported by al-Bakrī²², appears as a Berber deformation of Sunnī and Shīite Islam with some influences from Khārijite doctrine. Ibn Ḥawqal²³ emphasizes the ascetic life and the high morality of Barghawāṭa. They established numerous prayers (five a day and five a night), frequent fasts and complete ablutions; the severity of the punishments inflicted upon thieves (death), whoremongers (stoning) and liars (expelled) may be due to Khārijite rigour. In addition, other dissimilar rules, like fasting in the month of *Rajab* and *Shawwāl* or common prayer established on Thursday were established.²⁴ Their *takbīr* was as follows: a man placed one of his hands on the other and he said: *a-bism en-Yākūsh*, which means: 'In the name of Allāh',

and then in Berber language, they said: *moqqar-Yākūsh* which means: 'The great name of Allāh'. Then they repeated twenty-five times the same formula: *moqqar ijen-Yākūsh*, 'The Unique is Allah'; *ur-d-am Yākūsh*, 'There is none like Allāh'.²⁵

They banned some foods (heads of animals and fish, eggs, chickens) and their rules of marriage were a distortion of Islamic laws, as well as the existence of a *Qurʾān* in Tamazight (Berber) of 80 *Sūras* that bore the names of the prophets and animals.²⁶

The constant use of the Berber language, and frequent recourse to astrology and magic testifies to the influence of the environment on the belief of the Barghawāta. Apart from some ritual expressions and the beginning of some *Sūras* quoted by al-Bakrī, there are no original documents relating to this religion and it is impossible to reconstruct its profile or have a precise idea of it.²⁷

Other Khārijī kingdoms in Morocco

According to al-Bakrī and Ibn Khaldūn,²⁸ other small religious kingdoms in Morocco were born in this period, such as in the Ghumāra territory between Nukūr and Tittawin (modern Tetwan), and the Rif region (Northern Morocco). The Ghumāra tribe believed in their prophet Hāmīm. He wrote a collection of religious practices and some *Qurʾān* reading formulas in Berber.

Abū Qurra from the Berber Īfren tribe struggled against the Umayyad leaders and he became the *imām* of the Ṣufrī kingdom (776–778) in Tlemcen, the town he founded.²⁹ He commanded the Berber Īfren tribe, but unfortunately there is no information about the social and religious life of this kingdom.

Berber scholars and the centres for propagating Ibādī teachings

Ibādī communities in some areas of central North Africa, namely the western part of Libya, found support among the Berber tribes of Nafūsa, Hawwāra, Lawwāta, and Zanāta who saw the true representation of Islam in the Ibādī views, which did not subject them to any tyrannical rule, and provided a justification for their struggle for self-rule within the new religion on equal terms with the Arabs. It is also believed that the local people found a religious incentive to oppose the tyrannical rule of both the Umayyads and the Abbasids in Ibādī teachings.

Several of the important scholars of the Jabal Nafūsa, the Mzab, and Jerba stayed for some time in Arabia. After the visit of Salāma b. Saʿīd, who propagated the teaching of his school in North Africa, some Berber Ibādī scholars were chosen from different eastern Maghrib areas so that each region had its own religious leader from the native people. So the first 'bearers of learning' were Ismāʿil b. Dirār al-Ghadāmsī, ʿĀṣim al-Ṣadrātī,³⁰ Dāwūd al-Qibillī al-Nafzāwī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Rustam and Abū ʿl-Khaṭṭāb al-Maʿāfirī who spent five years with Abū ʿUbayda to acquire the teachings.³¹

These Ibādī scholars had an important role in propagating Ibadism in North Africa, above all among the Berbers. Their political struggles played an important role in passing on the teachings which they had learned in Baṣra to their fellow Ibādīs of North Africa. It seems that the Ibādī scholars were great peacemakers. Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Sūfī came from Asuf (El Oued) and he had travelled widely in the Maghrib between Libya and Sijilmāsa in Morocco. Once, he made peace among the people of Darjīn who were an Ibādī nomad group who lived in Tunisia outside the oasis of Tozeur.³²

It is not known whether they brought those teachings in a written form. In fact, the only written work ascribed to one of the 'bearers of learning' is the *Tafsīr* of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Rustam. It is reported that a text about the Ibādī doctrine in written form by Abū ʿUbayda Muslim was found in Fazzān in Libya in the middle of the 2nd/8th century.

Ibn Maghṭīr al-Jannāwunī, from Jabal Nafūsa, the first Berber Ibādī scholar mentioned in Ibādī sources who studied in Baṣra with Abū ʿUbayda Muslim b. Abī Karīma al-Tamīmī, returned to Jabal Nafūsa earlier, in 140/757 before the latter established his final opinions on the Ibādī legal system. He was the *muftī* in Jabal Nafūsa before the return of the five *ḥamalāt al-ʿilm*.

Ibādī sources also mention ʿAmr b. Yimkitin as among the first Ibādī scholars of Nafūsa. He started teaching the *Qurʾān* in the mosque of his village, Ifāṭmān, a ruined village in the western Jabal Nafūsa between Jādū and Kabāw. He would later become one of the most important leaders of Nafūsa and participated in the wars against the Abbasid army.³³

The core of the Nafūsa was namely Jādū, Yafran or Yefren and Lālūt and they formed a solid block of Berber villages and towns. Today, the area of Jabal Nafūsa is a region with a high concentration of ancient mosques,³⁴ many of which were built partially underground, and their particularity is the absence of minarets, like the Ibādī mosques which rose in the Mzabite towns in the south of Algeria. In Ibādī writings, the whole of Jabal

Nafūsa is filled with sites and sanctuaries, and books have been written to guide pilgrims.³⁵

The area is also characterized by fortified store houses, known as *igherm* in Berber, which consist of agglomerations of closed citadel-granaries contained within a defensive wall. During peaceful times, each *igherm* functioned as a central storage area and in times of attack, the village population retreated into the *igherm*.³⁶ They are also to be found in Tunisia, and similar communal collective store houses are to be found among the Berbers in Southern Morocco and probably elsewhere that testify to an ancient traditional organization of cohesion and unity.

After the return of the five bearers of learning, many important scholars emerged from among the Ibādīs of the Maghrib and many biographies are included in the list of *Tasmīyya shuyūkh Jabal Nafūsa wa-qurābum*.³⁷ Among them, there were many eminent personages. In the 2nd/8th century, there was Abū 'l-Munīb Muḥammad b. Yānīs,³⁸ a disciple of Ismā'īl b. Dirār al-Ghadāmsī. He was the teacher of Abū Khalīl Ṣāl and taught the Ibādī doctrine and the *siyar*, that is the biographies of important Ibādī *shuyūkh*. Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh b. al-Khayr (3rd/9th century), a disciple of Abān b. Wasīm, was an eminent lawyer and Abū Zakariyyā' Yaṣlītan al-Tūkītī³⁹ was a spiritual leader to whom Abū 'Ubayda al-Jannūwunī would refer to receive advice.

There were other centres in Nafūsa as well as in other places in the Maghrib. After the fall of the Imamate of Tāhart, the cultural activities of the Ibādīs were relocated to Warjilān and Wadī Righ. Jerba Island also became one of the main educational centres as a result of the activities of the 'azzāba council in the area. The south of Tunisia, in the beginning of 3rd/9th century, principally the Bilād al-Jarīd, named *al-Quṣūr* ("The Castles"),⁴⁰ was inhabited by Ibādīs and the village of Qanṭrāra was peopled by Ibādīs from Jabal Nafūsa. This region was strategic because it was tied to both the occidental imamate and Ibādī centres in Tripolitania.

Saints and sanctuaries of the Berber Ibādī communities

A whole corpus of hagiographical literature exists in Arabic and Berber, and part of it can be read in al-Ŵisīyānī, al-Darjīnī and al-Shammākhī who grew up among the later Ibādī communities in the Jabal Nafūsa, in the Mzab and elsewhere.

In North Africa, particular practices exist only in those countries. The first of these practices is that of saint worship. Based on a strong tradition of holiness

among charismatic figures, it can be assumed that this originated in pre-Islamic Berber practice: according to G. Camps,⁴¹ pre-Islamic Berbers practiced a cult of saints, a deification of the individual that implied a unique and personal connection with God. As mentioned previously, the Berbers held many cultural beliefs common to Arabs coming from the East, such as the belief in evil spirits and the evil eye, thus making a fusion of Arab and Berber religious practices much easier. It may also have been that the individualism and the egalitarian attitude of the Kharijites was encouraged.⁴²

A strong tradition of venerating saints' tombs is found throughout the regions inhabited by Berbers. The roots of this tradition can be traced back to ancient times.⁴³ In Jabal Nafūsa, many venerated sites, shrines, mosques and places are consecrated to the memory of saints.⁴⁴

Nowadays, the ancient town of Zuwāra, a port city in north-western Libya, is still inhabited by Ibādī Berbers. The cult that they profess for their pious men is not the same as the Sunnis. They argue, in fact, that they do not consider the pious as holy people, but consider them to be ordinary people who became established over others only for their particular acts or uncommon qualities; ordinary men worthy of respect and commemoration for the charity work they have done; famous people whose tomb is the right approach as a sign of respect, to render devout homage and a source for inspiration and an influence for good.⁴⁵

Berber holy women

Several of the saints were women, and the stories which were told about them in different chronicles reveal how much freedom and respect was enjoyed by these Ibādī women, in common with their Berber sisters elsewhere in the North Africa.

The important part played by these women in religion, so unusual among Muslim peoples, is relevant for the life of women and this interaction has contributed to the vitality of Berber culture. In particular, it is apparent in the very existence of Mzabite culture, for example, and in the five cities. Goichon⁴⁶ wrote an interesting book about women's education in which some points of Ibādī law were touched upon. The Mzabite young woman, in the period of her adolescence, is initiated into studies of both dogmatic and moral nature. This constitutes a discipline which is original to the Ibādīs and there is no similar institution in any Islamic country. All the Mzabite women's lives will continue in name of a 'religious sisterhood'. One of the interesting functions of this society is the ritual

purification of the dead (in Berber: *tamsiridin*). The superior matron presides each year over a reunion of the members. She is well versed in the *Qurʾān* and the works of the great *shuyūkh* of the sect and gives guidance to all in matters of religious law, the disobedience of which is punishable by a particular form of excommunication (*tebria*).⁴⁷ In the economic life of the group, the women's role does not extend beyond the limits of the family but she gives expression to her artistic inclinations: while her husband provides for the daily needs of his dependents, she draws upon the objects and landscapes which surround her, such as her jewelry, her garden, and so on, for the designs of the draperies that go to adorn her home. Another feature is magic, which is very important in Berber feminine society and the effect of the strict doctrines of the Ibādī upon the practice of magic and the social consequences thereof; that is, there is something of the psychological and sociological basis of magic and the way that magic is moulded by the form of the society in which it is found.⁴⁸

One of the interesting theological questions that divide the western and eastern Ibādī Imamate concerns the performance of duty by women, and in particular the duty to forbid wrong. Some Ibādī authors agreed that the duty to forbid wrong is not a universal obligation but it belongs to rulers. So women are obliged "to perform the duty in their heart, but not with the tongue".⁴⁹ Al-Jayṭālī, who adopted Ghazālī's statement that duty obligates slaves and women, also quotes an anecdote from the scholars of the Jabal Nafūsa in which one old woman exhorts another not to give up her share of commanding and forbidding.

Biographies of women who excelled in piety and love of science abounded; they contain features of curious habits and characteristics. Among many pious women, some are mentioned below:

Sārat. She lived in the 5th/11th century among the Lawāta people of Sūs in the Algerian Sahara. She was addressed in Berber by an unseen voice. According to al-Shammākhī, there was a Berber poem about Sārat's miracles:

Once, during a time of famine, she wanted to eat some of the supplies of dates that she had hidden in a vase.

A voice said: "People are hungry, Oh Sārat, do not eat anymore!" Then she offered all the dates she had in her vessel and the voice said to her: "Oh lucky vessel, for which you have obtained Paradise!"

Manzū. According to al-Darjīnī, she was the daughter of a *shaykh* of the Jabal Nafūsa, precisely near Lālūt, and lived in the 3rd/9th century. She was a saintly soul married to a wicked husband and endured many trials and tribulations.

Aṣīl lived in the 4th/10th or the 5th/11th century. Her home was the district of Tinaṣmaṣ in the Jabal Nafūsa. Like Joan of Arc and several of her Ibādī sisters, she was guided by an unseen and heavenly voice who spoke in Berber.

Zūragh. She lived in the Jabal Nafūsa. One of the miracles attributed to her was that when they lifted her bed in the summer they found snow underneath it.⁵⁰

Tūjīna. She was an ancient slave freed by Abū 'l-Khayr al-Zawāghī.⁵¹ One day, this *shaykh* went to the Abū 'Ubayda's sanctuary and saw her but he thought she was a man. He was thirsty, so he asked her (Tūjīna) for some water. She gave it to him. Then he asked her for some water for his ablutions. She gave it to him from the same source. Finally he understood she was a woman and he was stupefied.⁵²

Amat al-Wahīd. She was from Tindemmīra in Jabal Nafūsa and she did not want to get married. Her mother called twelve *shuyūkh* to convince her daughter to change her mind about marriage. Finally, she changed her mind, but she wanted to choose her husband, the *shaykh* Abū 'Amir al-Teṣrārī, whose name was given to an important sanctuary at Anīr or Inīr village, near the *mūdiriyya* of Faṣato.⁵³

Other pious women from Jabal Nafūsa are cited in the *Kitāb al-Siyar* by al-Shammākhī: *Aṣya* was from Wighu; *Umm Zārūr* was Abū 'Ubayda al-Tīghermīn's wife and she was a pious woman and al-Shammākhī recounted that she did miracles; *Shakīra* was a pious woman that lived in Anīr or Inīr village⁵⁴ and she diffused the copies of *Kitāb el Khalīl al-Ṣalīh* in Jabal Nafūsa. *Zayyidit* was 'Abd Allāh al-Malūshāī's daughter⁵⁵ and she was a poetess.

Berber codicology

The literature on the subject of Berber codicology is rather limited (with some exceptions). The Berber manuscripts are dispersed in different countries in North Africa and in Europe. In France, the Fonds Roux in the Institut de Recherches et d'Études sur le Monde Arabe et Musulman (IREMAM) in Aix-en-Provence possess a collection of Berber manuscripts. This collection belonged to Arsène Roux (1893–1971) a French official who, during his long stay in Morocco, from 1913 when he arrived as a soldier until 1956, collected many Berber texts in *Tasbelhit* (Berber variant spoken in the South of Morocco) written in Arabic characters. The only other existing public collection of Berber manuscripts which is comparable in size and diversity to the Fonds Roux is the Leiden collection in the library of Leiden in the Netherlands. This collection is kept in the Oriental Manuscript department

of the main library. At present it contains ca. 250 manuscripts.⁵⁶ The Berber manuscripts are all written in the Arabic script, which was adapted to represent all Berber phonemes. The most ancient Berber manuscript dates from 1680. Other manuscripts in *Tashelhit* are stored nowadays at the National Library in Paris and the General Library in Rabat.⁵⁷

In North Africa, in the South of Morocco, a long tradition of *Tashelhit* written religious poetry comprehends various genres. The most ancient written religious poetry was composed by Brahim u 'Ali Aznag (10th/16th century). The most famous author is Muḥammad u 'Ali u Brahim Awzal (12th/18th century) who wrote three poems: *al-Ḥawḍ* (The Reservoir), *Nnṣaḥt* (Advice) and *Baḥr al-dumū'* (Oceans of tears). Both were aimed at a general audience of native speakers in Morocco. Other Moroccan authors are known and many texts in verse, panegyric poems, and prophetic traditions are often quoted in Sous Berber texts.⁵⁸

In Algeria, in the Kabyle oriental region, the Library of Ulahbib's family contains some Berber and Arabic manuscripts collected by Lmuhub Ulahbib. Among the texts in this library, there are some commentaries about the religion and an '*aqīda* by Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Sanūsī (about 1429–1490). Other texts found, analyzed and studied by Aïssani⁵⁹ contain information about botany and astronomy.

Ibādī manuscripts are a rich resource and the region of Mzab⁶⁰ in the Algerian desert possesses various libraries in Ghardaya, El-Ateuf, Beni Isguen, Melika, Guerara and Berriane. In these libraries, Motylinski, in 1885, found many manuscripts written in Arabic, but traditionally, the people remember that they were written in Berber.⁶¹ Recently, Muḥammad u Madi, from Tripolitania in Libya, during his trip in Mzab, found and published an ancient document from 1881 concerning the research of Ibrāhīm ben Slimāne al-Shammākhī, a Berber from Jabal Nafūsa, who collaborated with Motylinski on some sources of Berber poetry.⁶² Other precious manuscripts are stored in the libraries of Tunis and Jerba. Among the leading Ibādī personalities who played an important role in Tunisia were Muḥammad al-Tamīmī, originally from Mzab, who established a Bookshop in Tunis and participated in publishing and circulating Ibādī literature, and the *shaykh* Sulaymān al-Jadāwī from Jerba.⁶³ The first known manuscripts of two authors in the Ibādī tradition, those of Ibn Sallām (3rd/9th century) and al-Buḡtūrī (6th/12th century), were found in Jerba Island.

Other manuscripts of a number of early Ibādī legal writings exist but many of them are in private libraries and collections which have been passed from generation to generation.⁶⁴

Berber Ibādī literary tradition

A literary tradition in Berber is attested in written form from the first centuries of Islam in North Africa and it is the Ibādī tradition in Arabic language as proved by the important historical works by Lewicki.⁶⁵

Recently, studies by Bekri and Ould-Braham have increased and completed the important analyses by Lewicki.

On the subject of the Berber language written at the time of Ibādīs, it can be noted that during the Middle Ages, circles of scholars (*ḥalqa*) and religious men and groups grew up that used the Berber language to convey their religious discourse, literary activity in Jabal Nafūsa and elsewhere in North Africa, leaving a relatively abundant literature, and in their writings in Arabic they bear the indelible mark of Berber in the transmission of the religious message.⁶⁶

One of the leading scholars of Nafūsa was Muqarrim⁶⁷ b. Muḥammad al-Buḡtūrī (6th/12th century) who wrote the *Siyar mashā'ikh Jabal Nafūsa*. The book contains an important collection of texts written in Berber. According to al-Shammākhī, this book was the main source for his work on the *shuyūkh* of Nafūsa and he wrote a brief biography of this author.⁶⁸

Another author preserved in his works many theological opinions from earlier sources, some of which are still lost. The author was Abū 'l-Faḍl Abū 'l-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Barrādī (6th/12th century). He did not write any theological books, but his works contain material on theology, in particular *Kitāb al-Jawābir*.⁶⁹

The Ibādīs' doctrine is summed up in the '*aqīda*, a synthesis of their faith and the basis of their teaching. The belief is learnt by heart at school, and then commented on by scholars according to their degree of interest.

The details relating to the ancient Arabic-Berber Ibādī literature contained in books on Ibādī '*aqīda*-s are sparse, but nevertheless they allow us to specify its nature. It should be noted first that the use of Berber as a literary language had to be quite old for the Berbers Ibādīs, for the majority did not know Arabic. Probably, official acts that came from the chancery of Tāhart were written in Berber and transcribed into Arabic by Imāms who were destined for the *mashā'ikh* (Venerable) of the Ibādī Maghribian communities. For example, according to Lewicki, 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, the second *Imām* of Tāhart, who reigned towards the end of 9th and the beginning of the 4th/10th century, used Berber languages in his correspondence with Ibādīs who inhabited the Jabal Nafūsa. In this period, a prominent Ibādī polemicist, Maḥdī al-Nafūsi (lived about the 4th/10th), who

distinguished himself in the ideological struggle against the Mu'tazilites, wrote a text in Berber to refute the doctrines of Naffāth b. Naṣr, who was the protagonist of an Ibādī sectarian doctrine (*Naffāthiyya*).⁷⁰

In the period between the end of the 9th/15th, Ibādī theologians formulated a number of creeds (*'aqā'id*). Four of them were written by scholars from Southern Algeria, Southern Tunisia and Jerba Island. Two of these works were the *Masā'il al-tawḥīd* of Abū 'l-'Abbās Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Bakr (5th/11th century)⁷¹ and *the Kitāb uṣūl al-dīn* by Ṭabghurīn b. Dāwūd b. 'Īsa al-Malshūḥī (6th/12th century). The third *'aqīda* was written by *shaykh* Abū Saḥl Yaḥyā b. Ibrāhīm b. Sulaymān of Warjilān (5th–6th/12th–13th century).

The fourth, *'aqīda al-tawḥīd*, was translated into Arabic from Berber by Abū Ḥafs 'Umar b. Jamī' al-Nafūsī. Although this translation was made towards the end of 9th/15th, it is believed that the original text in Berber was written much earlier, probably about the end of 6th/12th. It is thought that it was written by some members of the *'azzāba* council who also wrote the famous work on Ibādīs jurisprudence known as *Dīwān al-'azzāba*.⁷²

In 904/1498 Abū 'l-'Abbās Aḥmad b. Sa'īd al-Shammākhī (d. 928/1521) completed his commentary on the *'aqīda*. The second commentary on it was written by Abū Sulaymān Dāwūd b. Ibrāhīm al-Ṭālātī (d. 967/1559).

Among the theological works based on this *'aqīda* of Ibn Jamī' is *al-Lulu'ah fi 'ilm al-tawḥīd*, a poem (*Urjuza*) by Qāsim b. Sulaymān b. Muḥammad al-Shammākhī (d. about 1275/1858) also wrote a large commentary on his poem. *Shaykh* Abū Sittah wrote an excellent commentary (*Hashbiya*) on the commentary of al-Shammākhī mentioned earlier. The last commentary on the *'aqīda* of Ibn Jamī' was written by *shaykh* Muḥammad b. Yūsuf Aṭfayyish (d. 1332/1914) and was lithographed in Algiers 1326/1908.⁷³ Motylinski introduced a French translation of the Ibādī creed of 'Amr b. Jamī' to the Fourteenth Congress of the Orientalists in Algiers in 1905.⁷⁴

There are three other similar works by scholars from Jabal Nafūsa. The first of these was written by Abū Zakariyyā' Yaḥyā b. al-Khayr al-Jannāwunī. He was a Berber, and his *nisba* derives from Ijnāwun (modern Jennawen, near Jādū), in the eastern part of the Jabal Nafūsa. Al-Shammākhī mentions him amongst the notables of the 6th/12th century. This *'aqīda* is known as *'aqīdat Nafūsa*. There is also a study of the Ibādī creed of Abū Zakariyyā' al-Jannāwunī with an Italian translation and an examination of its relation to the Ibādī creed of 'Amr b. Jamī' by Rubinacci.⁷⁵ In this study, it emerges that al-Jannāwunī rejects any determinism and absolute free will. He accepts the freedom of human actions, albeit in a restricted form. The actions of men, although

created by God, proceed from a power that man possesses.⁷⁶

The second work is in verse and was composed by Abū Naṣr Faṭḥ b. Nūḥ al-Malūshā'ī of Ṭamlūshāyt and is known as *al-Qaṣīda al-nuniya fi 'l-tawḥīd*. Different commentaries were written on it, including the famous one by Ismā'il al-Jayṭālī.

The third and shortest was written by 'Amr b. 'Alī al-Shammākhī (d. 792/1389) and is known as *Uṣūl al-diyānāt*. These *'aqā'id* were written in simple language—one of them originally in Berber—and were short so that they could be easily memorized and understood by students at the beginning their studies, and by ordinary people as well. The works added by subsequent Ibādī scholars of later times were mainly commentaries on some of these creeds.

Berber Ibādī literary in recent times

Berber society in the region of Mzab, in Jabal Nafūsa or in Jerba Island in recent times has preserved and supported some vital aspects of Ibādī doctrine, even if many transformations have occurred.⁷⁷

In Libya, during the period of colonialism, Ibādī activities were pursued by a Berber from Jabal Nafūsa, Sulaymān al-Bārūnī who was an active Muslim politician and played a significant part in the struggle against the Italian invaders in 1911. His prestige in international Muslim circles thanks to his heroic fighting against Western colonial invasion brought appreciation for the Ibādī contribution to Islamic unity. He was a historian and scholar too. He learned the first rudiments of science and dogma from his father. He also studied in Cairo and Mzab and finished his studies in Tunis. He moved within several countries, and he was elected in the first Republic of Libya. He preserved relations with the Sultanate of Oman where he lived for 16 years from 1924 to 1940. He established the *Bārūniya Lithographic Press* in Cairo where he published some Ibādī books by Oman and Maghribian authors. He printed his newspaper *al-Asad al-Islāmī* and wrote several articles and books in which he propagated his views and tried to give a picture of the Ibādīs and their doctrine.

In more recent times, we know of other religious literary compositions that are not widely known or forthcoming. These are some poems of an Ibādī religious type of oral compounds in the regions around the early 19th century, in particular in Jabal Nafūsa.

In 1986, Serra⁷⁸ published some extracts from two poems that had religious content concerning Ibādī doctrine

collected in 1969 in Jabal Nafūsa (Mezzu) after research that had taken the indication from a report by Beguinot.⁷⁹ The author of these two works, confirmed by Serra, was a certain Abū Fālgha, who lived at Mezzu in the first half of the 19th century. The content of these poems is essentially religious and one of them reveals an exhortation to follow the precepts of Islam to enjoy the joys of Paradise in the hereafter. Their interest lies in allowing us to understand better the Berber language of religion: the five 'Pillars of Islam' (the five *arkān*, in Berber *am-muden*). 'Faith' *abrid*; *ajellid* 'God', and so on.

Conclusion

In North Africa, a large number of great Berber scholars emerged in the three communities of Jabal Nafūsa, Jerba Island and Southern Tunisia and Algeria, and participated widely in Ibādī studies. These intended to throw light not only on the expansion of the Ibādī teachings in North Africa, but also on the Ibādī vision of Islamic theology. The Berber language was utilized as a vehicle for the diffusion of Islam in North Africa and many manuscripts were written since the beginning of the diffusion of this new doctrine. Beyond their historical value, these manuscripts are important because they contain a large quantity of details relating to the ancient Berber language, part of which still needs to be studied, analyzed and deciphered.

Other considerations resulting from this brief and basic study and still to be developed relate on the one hand to the diffusion of the Kharijism from which two prevailing observations can be made: Berbers adopted the new doctrine not only against injustices of orthodox governments, but in order to maintain their political autonomy in the Maghribian areas and affirm and strengthen Berber cultural identity. On the other hand, as regards their contribution to the diffusion of the doctrine, the Berbers not only played an important role in Ibādī theology, but they left evident signs of liberal and democratic thought. In the current context of the Arab revolutions, the Ibādīs also define themselves as the 'democrats of Islam'.

Notes

- 1 Smogorzewski 192 C8: 45–47. Schacht 1956: 375–398. Ould-Brahām 1992: 5–35.
- 2 Chaker 2001: 136.
- 3 Lewicki 1955: 29.
- 4 Bel 1938: 137. Bekri 1957: 56.
- 5 Mammeri wrote: *Je pense que cette contestation de tout ordre oppresseur est une des essentielles composantes de la culture méditerranéenne* (Mammeri: 81). And in the Christian epoch: *Le christianisme de Berbères dans la verdeur de sa jeunesse, est une religion exigeante... Par leur soif d'absolu les chrétiens d'Afrique se montrent querelleurs, violents, intransigeants... d'où les innombrables schismes... Les plus caractéristiques... fut le donatisme* (Camps 1986: 179).
- 6 Gaiser 2010: 71.
- 7 Norris 1982: 76.
- 8 Prevost 2008: 128.
- 9 For more details about this author, see Ould-Brahām 2011: 311–344.
- 10 Lewicki 1961a: 23–27. For further information on Ibādīs in South Tunisia, see Prevost 2008.
- 11 Rubinacci 1952: 95–110.
- 12 Ibn Ṣaghīr. See Motylinski 1908 [1968]: 10.
- 13 Apart the economic similarity between the two reigns, the evidence confirms a certain 'ethnic unity' and the various schisms, heresies and political problems destroyed the kingdom of Tāhart (Zerouki 1987: 116).
- 14 The Ibādīs were renowned for their commercial aptitude and enterprising spirit. On the basis of Ibādī manuscripts, Lewicki argued that Ibādīs travelled to a Sudanese reign (in the late 2nd/8th century) for purposes of trade and proselytization. Ibn al-Ṣaghīr reported that during the first imamate of Tāhart (776/7–784/5), strong commercial relations were established with the Sūdān (Lewicki 1964: 300). So, probably the first form of Islam carried into the Western Sudan may have been that practiced by Ibādī merchants. Ibādī merchants were described as strict and with commercial probity. The community had a long tradition of literacy and respect for learning. Many merchants in the North kept their own account books, permitting a high level of complexity in commercial affairs.
- 15 See the edition of al-Bakrī edited by de Slane 1857: 148–50. Monteil 1968: 43–45 and notes 87–88.
- 16 Love 2010: 178.
- 17 Savage 1992: 367.
- 18 Norris 1982.
- 19 Ibn Khaldūn 1927: 125–133.
- 20 Talbi 1973: 224.
- 21 According to Talbi: *L'acculturation, qui trahissait les complexes, était une arme constamment retournée contre l'adversaire* (1973: 225).
- 22 Al-Bakrī 1857: 266–271.
- 23 Ibn Ḥawqal 1964: 80.
- 24 According to Slousch, the fundamental basis of this movement is Judaism, referenced with taboos, prayers and fasts (Slousch 1910: 396) quoted in H. T. Norris 1982: 95.
- 25 About the derivation of *Yākūsh*, see Marcy 1932: 36. Lewicki 1967: 227–229. Calassanti-Motylinski 1971: 141–148.
- 26 Le Tourneaux 1975: 1075–6.
- 27 Norris 1982: 92–97. In different epochs, various translations of the *Qur'ān* existed in Berber, in particular in the Almohad epoch (Basset 1920 [2002: 46–7]). Recently, Naït-Zerrad has partially translated the *Qur'ān* into Kabyle (1988).
- 28 Ibn Khaldūn 1927: 144; Al-Bakrī 1857: 197–199.
- 29 Ibn Khaldūn 1934: 199–201.
- 30 He was from the Ṣadrāta Berber tribe. Many factions of this tribe came from Algeria and settled in Jabal Nafūsa (Motylinski 1898: 74).
- 31 About the choice of these scholars according to Gouvion: *Les*

- Abāḍites avaient concentré leurs forces et leur commandement au Jabal Nafusa tandis que les Sofrites s'étant répandus dans tous le Maghreb* (Gouvion 1926: 57, n. 1).
- 32 Norris 1982: 90.
- 33 Ennami (al-Nāmī), 1971: 67.
- 34 In the region there were many apostolic churches (Calassanti-Motyliniski 1898: 74).
- 35 Serra 1971: 65–75.
- 36 Basset 1899: 437.
- 37 Lewicki 1955: 27–30.
- 38 Maybe he had Christian origins (Lewicki 1955: 29).
- 39 He was from Tūkit, a village with an ancient “apostolic mosque” (*kanisa Tūkit*) (Lewicki 1955: 36. Motyliniski 1899: 74).
- 40 Prevost 2008: 79.
- 41 Camps 1987: 189.
- 42 Lewicki 1965: 3–27. *Idem* 1967: 5–39.
- 43 A network of *zawiyya* traditionally helped the spread of basic literacy and knowledge of Islam in rural regions.
- 44 Basset 1899: 423–470; 88–120.
- 45 Serra 1971: 73.
- 46 Goichon 1925: 219–220.
- 47 Masqueray wrote: *L'excommunication mozabite (tebria) consiste dans l'exclusion de toutes les cérémonies publiques, quelles qu'elles soient, et surtout l'exclusion de la prière. Nul n'en est exempté par son rang* (1879: 74).
- 48 Goichon 1925: 184–218.
- 49 Cook 2000: 415.
- 50 Norris 1982: 84.
- 51 He was an Ibāḍī *shaykh* in Tripolitania who lived in the 4th/10th century (Ould-Braham 1988: 20).
- 52 Al-Shammākhī *Kiṭāb al-Siyar*: 1. Basset 1899: 109. Lewicki 1934b: 292. Ould-Braham 1988: 20.
- 53 Basset 1899b: 438–439.
- 54 An ancient granary (in Berber: *igbrerm*) existed in this little village. In the Berber dialect of Siwa, *enir* means “front” (Lewicki 1955: 35).
- 55 Basset 1899b: 451–52.
- 56 Boogert (van den) 2002. Stroomer, H. & Peyron, M.: 2003.
- 57 Galand-Pernet 1972: 299–316.
- 58 Boogert (van den) 1997: 35–67.
- 59 Aïssani 2011: 191–210. Recently, a manuscript concerning the Sanusi creed in Kabyle Berber from the Lmuhub Ulahbib library in Béjaïa (Algeria) has been analyzed in a Ph.D. thesis at Leiden University by J. E. Goutova (2011).
- 60 There are 8000 manuscripts according to Ben Thaïer 2011: 52–75.
- 61 Ould-Braham 1992: 5–35.
- 62 Muḥammad u Madi 2008b (www.tawalt.com).
- 63 Ennami (al-Nāmī), 1971: 18.
- 64 Smogorzewski 1928: 45–47. Schacht 1956: 375–398.
- 65 Galand-Pernet 1998: 18–21; Ould-Braham 1994: 87–125; Bekri 1977: 55–108.
- 66 É. Masqueray wrote: *Le shaykh, maître de la ḥalqa, enseignait d'abord la grammaire arabe sans laquelle la religion ne saurait être compris, ensuite le preuves de l'unicité de Dieu et tout ce qui concerne les actes d'adaptation, tels que la prière, le jeûne, le pèlerinage, puis la jurisprudence et particulièrement les « jugements ».* (Abū Zakariyyā' al-Warjlānī, trans. Masqueray 1868 [1960]: XXXVIII).
- 67 The correct form should be *Maqran*, or *Muqran*, from the Berber word (*amoqran*) meaning great “big, and old”.
- 68 Ennami (al-Nāmī), 1970: 84–5. Lewicki 1955: 28.
- 69 Rubinacci 1952: 95–110.
- 70 Basset 1899: 381. Lewicki 1936: 270–271 ; Lewicki 1961a: 118. Rebstock 1983: 249–256.
- 71 Lewicki 1934: 275–296; Schacht: 387.
- 72 These councils are still in action in the region of Mzab, but in both Ibāḍī communities of Jabal Nafusa and Jerba Island they were dissolved during the Ottoman rule. A very interesting, detailed study by Rubinacci concerns the ‘azzāba system, its rules and regulations, and the role it played in the Ibāḍī communities and education (1960: 37–78).
- 73 The works of the modern Ibāḍī scholar Muḥammad b. Yūsuf Aṭfayyish were published by Abū Ishaq Ibrāhīm Aṭfayyish from Mzab who was exiled from Algeria and settled in Egypt, where he issued his journal, *al-Minhaj* (Al-Nāmī 1971: 17). This review, *al-Minhaj* was closed for many years. Nowadays, thanks to the Association *Shaykh* Abū Ishaq Ibrāhīm Tḥeyyesh au service du patrimoine Ghardayya—Algérie, the review has been published again in 2011.
- 74 Motyliniski 1905 (1968): 505–547.
- 75 Rubinacci 1964: 552–592.
- 76 *Amma wāḥid yadullu 'alā wāḥid, fa wujād al-ft'l yadullu 'alā 'l-istiṭā'a* (Rubinacci 1964: 566).
- 77 The creed of Mzab Ibāḍī requires abiding imperatively to three rules in order to preserve their faith: the obligation to exercise solidarity (*uwalā'a*) to those that you know do well, to apply the exclusion of the community (*barā'a*) to those who commit evil deeds, and the prohibition of committing sins. For further information about the application of the principles of this creed in Mzab in the 12th century, see Goichon 1927: 228–234.
- 78 Serra 1986: 521–539.
- 79 Beguinot 1921: 306.

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